



Disability Awareness Month 1942 --



Hawking, Stephen (William)

Theoretical Physicist

The British theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking, has devoted much of his life to probing the space-time described by general relativity and the singularities where it breaks down. And he's done most of this work while confined to a wheelchair, brought on by the progressive neurological disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's Disease. Hawking is the Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, a post once held by Isaac Newton.

In the late 1960s, Hawking proved that if general relativity is true and the universe is expanding, a singularity must have occurred at the birth of the universe. In 1974 he first recognized a truly remarkable property of black holes, objects from which nothing was supposed to be able to escape. By taking into account quantum mechanics, he was able to show that black holes can radiate energy as particles are created in their vicinity. But perhaps his most impressive feat was writing the international bestseller *A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME*. The book spent more than four years on the London Sunday Times bestseller list—the longest run for any book in history.

His many publications include *The Large Scale Structure of Spacetime* with G F R Ellis, *General Relativity: An Einstein Centenary Survey*, with W Israel, and *300 Years of Gravity*, with W Israel. Stephen Hawking has two popular books published; his best seller *A Brief History of Time*, and his later book, *Black Holes and Baby Universes and Other Essays*.

Professor Hawking's has twelve honorary degrees, and was awarded the CBE in 1982, and made a Companion of Honour in 1989. He is the recipient of many awards, medals and prizes and is a Fellow of The Royal Society and a Member of the US National Academy of Sciences.

Stephen Hawking continues to combine family life (he has three children and one grandchild), and his research into theoretical physics together with an extensive program of travel and public lectures.